Story Of An Unusual Crook

Impelled by a fate which knew no resistance, the life of Thomas Ambrose makes a story which has few equals in the criminal annals of the country, says the Chicago Inter-Ocean. If he could be induced to tell everything, the story would read like a strange recital of fiction. But enough is known of his life for the past quarter of a century to warrant the statement that his life has been a remarkable one in all its phases. Wasted away almost to a skeleton, bent over and tottering like an old man, Ambrose walked unsteadily forward when he was called to the bar of justice at the term of the Federal Court in this city and told Judge Reed that he was guilty as charged—the robbery of the postoffice at Northwood. When the court attempted to draw him out and get him to talk of his past life he had but few words to say, and these few words were punctuated by severe coughing spells that seemed as though they would rend the feeble frame apart. He asked for no clemency, did not attempt to minimize the crime to which he had pleaded guilty, and did not utter a murmur when he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in the penitentiary at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.

Many were those in the courtroom when he was sentenced who believed he would never live through his sentence. He seemed to be on the brink of the grave. But Ambrose is an actor as well as a crook and he was playing a part that day in the courtroom, and he played it so effectively as to fool one and all. Recent reports from the penitentiary indicate that Ambrose is getting along splendidly and that he will have regained his full strength and vigor long before the expiration of his sentence. And the probabilities are that before the loyed for release comes he will have planned and mapped out another campaign of robbery and crime. Caught in the act of crawling through a window after robbing the postoffice at Northwood, Ambrose was shot through the lung by the night watchman of the town.

Last winter, about Christmas, found him in St. Paul with an empty pocket and nothing in sight. He had been over the ground time and again, and thought he could pick up a few hundred at Northwood. There was not enough in sight for two men, and he decide to go it alone. Dressed like a tramp he made his way to the little town, and that night successfully entered the postoffice building and blew the safe. He secured about $300 and was leaving the building when he dropped a few coins. Forgetting his usual caution he struck a match and picked them up. The nightwatchman saw the light and watched and when Ambrose came crawling through the window with the swag he winged him. It was the first time he had made a mistake in twenty-five years; the first time he had been captured although he had participated in hundreds of robberies, many of them committed under much more dangerous circumstances.

Ambrose never complained. He took his capture philosophically. He had no harsh word for any one. He simply stated that he had made a mistake, and that no one was to blame but himself. He even had a kind word for the officer who almost ended his life. He asked for no help from his pals, was anxious to be sentenced, and in a happy frame of mind as the train hurried him away to the prison, which was to be his home for three years.

Ambrose has said that as soon as he is released he intends to turn a number of big tricks, get enough money to keep him for the balance of his life, and then settle down.

It was thought he was fatally injured; Ambrose himself thought his days were numbered. But he had a constitution like iron, and as soon as he was able to travel he waived all his rights and was brought to this city for arraignment. He was anxious to receive his sentence; anxious to get to the prison, where he might have the benefit of medical attendance and nursing, and where he might recover at the earliest possible moment. He had no word of complaint against any one, but refused to talk of his past life when taken into court.

There is every reason to believe that Ambrose is one of the cleverest crooks the country has ever known, associated with a gang of the leading bank and postoffice robbers, who have been the most successful in their operations. He has known the ups and downs of life in full measure. He has had several fortunes and lost them. But the spirit of burglarizing has ever been with him, and even in the days of his greatest prosperity, when he could count his wealth by the tens of thousands he would slip away to some other part of the country to turn a trick or two. He had worked from the Atlantic to the Pacific. When not with a gang of thieves his time has been devoted to the saloon, the gambling house and fast horses. Trusting too much to employes and being a plunger, he has seen fortunes crumble time after time, with nothing left but the jimmy and nitro glycerin to return to.

Ambrose is but one of the many names by which he was known by his pals, and the probabilities are that his true name never will be known. Born of parents of foreign birth, who had come to this country only a short time before his birth, Ambrose spent the early days of his life in the oil fields of Pennsylvania. Like other boys whose parents were poor, his school days were few, and stopped when he was but a mere lad in order that he might go to work in the fields with other boys of his own age. With no ambition whatever and with no thought of the future, Ambrose plodded along, stepping from one position to another as his increased growth warranted the bosses in placing him in new positions. It was just about the time he reached his majority that nitroglycerin began to be used in blowing the wells, and his unusual ability in the handling of the deadly explosive soon made him an expert and a valuable man in the fields. Still he had little thought of the future and did not aspire to anything better.

One day just after "shooting" a well he noticed a well dressed man watching him closely. This man finally engaged the young man in conversation when no one was within hearing distance, questioning him closely in regard to the use of the new explosive. Ambrose talked freely with the stranger, telling him all he knew about the "shooting" of the wells. Then the stranger asked him in regard to the pay he received for the dangerous work. It was a mere nominal sum. "Why," said the stranger, "if you will join me I can place you in a position where you can make more money in a month than you get here in five years."

"What is your occupation" asked young Ambrose.

"I am a safeblower," replied the stranger.

The work appealed to the young man and it took but little persuasion to induce him to join the stranger. The older man was an expert bank robber, but he knew nothing of the use of nitroglycerin although an expert in the use of gunpowder, which he remarked was becoming a back number. "But with your knowledge of nitroglycerin," said the older man, "we can make a fortune in a few years." And they did, for bank robbery followed bank robbery, and the promise of the older man was fulfilled in every respect.

After a time Ambrose, who had accumulated great wealth, said good-bye to his pals and engaged in the saloon business in the Middle West. Then he drifted to the Pacific coast, where for a time he conducted one of the biggest gambling houses in California. But days of adversity came and from the possessor of wealth he found himself penniless. This experience was but the experience of succeeding years, and was repeated many times

Captains of Big Liners Ashore

The quietest and most inconspicuous man in the world is the captain of the big ocean liner when he comes ashore. What a change to him from wild ocean scenes of storm and peril to prosaic life on land; from a position of utmost responsibility and autocratic authority to the utmost relaxation.

After the inevitable worry and strain of the voyage with a vessel that cost millions, its passengers and cargo, the sudden transformation is naturally very agreeable. Even the trip up the bay after entering the harbor has been one of more or less concern, lest some distaste might suddenly come unexpectedly from collision, an explosion or other mishap without warning.

When at last the big ship is fast to her pier then for the first time the vast responsibilities of the voyage end, and the captain goes ashore with light step, as happy as a child. His only remaining official task is to go to the Custom House and perform the usual routine duties, sign the necessary papers, etc. Next he visits the office of the steamship company, hands in his report, gets the news receives instructions, and he is a free man.

But what do captains do while in port? Chiefly enjoy themselves in their own way, visit friends, go to the theatre a night or two a week and perhaps accompany an old acquaintance to his home in the country, but never very far away from the ship. Answering invitations, and necessarily politely declining hundreds of the most cordial and pressing requests to visit friends, old and new, is perhaps one of the captain's social duties requiring much diplomacy. It has been said that the captains usually put up at the best hotels and spend every hour in having a good time with friends only to glad to entertain them. This is not true. Men educated in a strenuous life of ocean wayfaring and hardship naturally seek a quiet recreation with friends whom they know very well rather than the excitement of receptions and dinners.

Prefer to Live On Board.

It used to be the fashion for some of the captains, said an authority on the subject, "to go to the biggest hotels and find rest in new scenes and the reaction that follows the strain of a voyage. But inquiry brings the answer that they prefer to lodge on their ships and be near at hand in case of fire or other accident, as the memory of that terrible fire at the Hoboken pier a few years ago has not been forgotten. No captain feels entirely at rest very far away from his ship. It is his pride and chief concern. No general ever loved his army or soldier his comrades, or man his wife, more than a captain loves his ship.

Captains Best of Seamen.

These famous commanders of the greatest vessels in the world have been selected because of their record. They began life by making themselves thorough seamen and doing what no academy or instructor could do for them. Take, for instance, the career of Captain Karl Kaempff, commander of the Deutschland. He has a dozen medals for his achievements, his bravery and his saving of ships and human life. When he had completed his one hundred and fiftieth voyage he was called the most popular commander, and his seamanship was so distinguished as to win praise from the German Kaiser.

He was born in 1855. At the age of fourteen he made his first voyage in the bark Bazar. Later he commanded the Japanese vessel the Tatsu Maru. In 1879 he returned to Germany and entered the service of the Hamburg-American line. Here he began his career as fourth officer of the Lessing, and was rapidly advanced. Now, at the age of fifty-two, he has a sea experience of nearly forty years.

His bravery and personal courage are famous. In 1879, at the risk of his life, he saved a passenger in the harbor of Havre. But one of his great feats was saving the life of the Baroness De Mesme in the shark infested waters of St. Thomas. He leaped into the sea and fought with her in her wild struggles for an hour, supporting her until a boat came in spite of her efforts to pull him under. For this the President of Venezuela gave him the Bolivar medal. In 1893, when in command of the Gellert, his ship took fire, but through his great coolness and extraordinary exertion both ship and passengers were saved, this after tremendous labor of fifty-four hours in a winter gale.

He won the admiration and friendship of the Kaiser in this way:—While steaming through the narrow Lougefjord in command of the Augusta Victoria he suddenly met the imperial yacht Hohenzollern, and maneuvred his ship so skilfully in avoiding collision that the Emperor ordered the signal "bravo" hoisted and then went aboard the ship, gave the captain his photograph bearing his autograph and also sent a telegram to the directors of the line saying: "I have just inspected the Auguste Victoria and am glad to say to you that the ship in all its parts is in perfect condition and that the captain has made an excellent impression on me."

In 1893 Captain Kaempff met the disabled steamer Atalia and towed her 750 miles to New York, thus saving the ship and securing the salvage of $25,000.

Now, it must be apparent that men with such records, who have spent their lives in battling with the greatest forces of nature, in sailing ships with thousands of passengers and cargoes worth a million each, care little for the vanities of social life. They see enough of it aboard their ships.

Captain Otto Cuppers, formerly of the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, now comes into port as commander of the new Kaiser Wilhelm II. When his former ship had celebrated her one hundredth round trip on July 4, 1906, it was stated that during all the time he was in command of the Kaiser Wilhelm she had never stopped her engines at sea, and during her seven years and fifty thousand miles of voyages, carrying a quarter of a million passengers, she had made an average speed of 215 knots an hour.

Captain Ruse, commands a four million dollar ship, carrying three thousand passengers, with a crew of six hundred trained men to make life on the ocean wave as safe as in a hotel on land. "I don't exactly feel right," said the Captain to a Herald reporter, "when I leave my ship except for a brief visit to friends within an hour's ride of New York. I feel happiest when I am here, although my officers are the best and maintain the same discipline as if I were on board.

"It is very pleasant, however, to meet friends on shore, occasionally attending theatre or opera, making sure that you can return to your ship in good season each night. I prefer my cabin to accommodations on shore."

Captain J. T. W. Charles was promoted from the Saxonia, of the Boston Cunard line, to the Umbria, of the Cunard line, last spring. They speak of him as being a "gentleman sailor" who has education and refinement and whose society is much sought by men eminent in literary life. He, too, said he preferred his ship to sleeping on shore, but he had many friends and found much pleasure in their society, both in the city and in the country near New York. The Cunard Company has provided quarters on shore at the end of the pier alongside the dock where their ships lie.

Spacious bedrooms with modern bathing facilities make it a pleasant change from the cabin on shipboard. It is like being ashore, and yet within touch of the ship. The captain can here find rest and quiet, and is entirely cut off from outsiders or even his own shipmates. In a word, he can retire to his quarters and not be disturbed by chance visitors or even his intimates, and thus secure rest. In summer the river breezes make sleeping and the apartments on the pier delightful as there is plenty of fresh air moving up and down the river.

The White Star Company has provided similar quarters for the commanders of its ships. But ordinarily they keen to their ships by choice. Captain J. B. Ranson, of the Baltic, said he preferred the comfort and seclusion of his cabin to anything that the land had to offer, no matter how luxurious or inviting it might be. He, too, found recreation and change from sea life in visiting friends, old and new, but he found it impossible to accept but few invitations.

Captain Alix of the Provence.

One must travel far and wait long to find a more popular commander than Captain Alix, of the Provence the crack greyhound of the French line. He was born in Bretagne about fifty years ago, and was educated from his youth for the sea.

He began his career in the French navy and later entered the service of the French line, first as captain of the Normandie, then of the Bretagne and next the Loraine. His greatest promotion came a year and a half ago, when he was given command of the Provence on her first voyage. Captain Alix ranks high for his seamanship and bravery, and is distinguished as the captain who never had an accident. He still holds his grade in the French navy as "Captain of the Frigate."

Another notable commander is Commodore F. H. Bonjer, who has just made his two hundredth round trip as captain of the Nieuw Amsterdam, of the Holland-American line. He has commanded all the company's ships on their maiden trips. Next year he is to be appointed commander of the Rotterdam of 24,200 tons.

Commodore Bonjer is considered very fortunate in never having had an accident or shipwreck while in the service of his company. His age is fifty-two; he was appointed captain in his twenty-third year; was born on a sailing ship, trading between America and Africa, commanded by his father. He was educated in the Seaman's School in Holland and entered the service of his company as a third officer, at the age of eighteen.—New York Herald.

A Criminal Attack

on an inoffensive citizen is frequently made in that apparently useless little tube called the "appendix." It's generally the result of protracted constipation, following liver torpor. Dr. King's New Life Pills regulate the liver, prevent appendicitis, and establish regular habits of the bowels. 25c. at any drug store.

The Boston Store
M. HANDELSMAN
2908 Washington Avenue.

MONDAY SALE!
October 21st.

Best Check Apron Gingham, 7c and 8c value, 5c & 6c
Calicoes, all colors.....5c
Buffalo Mills Sheetings, 8c value.....6 1-2c
All colors of fine Flannelettes, suitable for Kimonos, 20c value, Monday.....12 1-2c
(See Window Display)
All colors Cannon Cloth, 15c value.....10c
Daisy Cloth, all colors, the real thing for girl's dresses, 15c value, Monday.....10c
Trilby Flannel Suitings, 15c value.....10c
Dark Colors Outing Flannels, Monday.....5c
Clark's O. N. T. Cotton, spool.....5c

54-Inch Broadcloth, all colors, $1.50 value Monday's sale..... 98c
38-Inch Serge, 75c value. Monday's sale..... 49c
White Flannel, 25c value. Monday's sale..... 15c
California All Wool White Flannel, 50c value Monday's sale..... 39c

Red Medicated All Wool Flannel; Monday's sale, 49c
72x90 Bed Sheets, 75c value.....49c
81x90 Bed Sheets, 89c value.....65c
Bed Spreads, $2.50 value.....$1.98
11-4 Double Blankets, $1.25 value.....75c
12-4 Extra Heavy Blankets, $2.00 value.....$1.48

We also put on sale Monday a big line of Tailored Suits. The prices will sure please you.

Don't forget that we have a Ladies' Tailoring Department on our second floor, and we employ none but the best men tailors and guarantee a fit or no money.

RUGS! RUGS! RUGS!

36-68 Body Brussels Rugs, $5.00 value.....$3.98
27-58 Body Brussels Rugs, $4.00 value.....$2.98
27-52 Body Brussels Rugs, $3.00 value.....$1.98

The Boston Store
M. HANDELSMAN
2908 Washington Avenue.

Kodak Pictures
Made as They Should be
—at—
"Epes"
"The Kodak Store"
We repair typewriters. All work guaranteed.
2909 Washington Ave.

FRIDAY
October 25th
EXPOSITION
Auditorium
GRAND CONCERT
For the Benefit of the
UNITED CONFEDERATE VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

Francis MacMillen
The World-renowned American Violinist, assisted by
MME. ROSINA VAN DYK,
The celebrated Dutch Soprano.
Tickets, :-: 25c
Free List Positively Suspended.

mrs. homelover:

you love a happy home and you believe what little house maid says, don't you?

the first question you ask is, "where can i get good furniture?" ask anybody.

the next question you ask is, "where can i get this good furniture at the lowest price?" ask those who deal with us.

you know that prices in newspapers all look alike, so we simply ask you to come and see the prices on our furniture as you look at it.

Special This Week:
$80 Parlor Suite, $67.50

get one of lash's heating stoves and warm up. if you need a stove of any kind, come to see us. 3.50 oil heater for 2.50.

M. H. LASH
2803-5-7-9 Washington Ave. Newport News, Va.

Branch Stores: WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.
2707-2709 WASHINGTON AVE. NEWPORT NEWS, VA.
MEYERS BROS
DEPARTMENT STORE.
Mail and Phone Orders Promptly Filled.

A SPECIAL AND NOVEL ATTRACTION.

We have arranged that for all next week our customers may have free lessons in the cookery art by visiting the demonstration of
ARMOUR'S EXTRACT OF BEEF

The lady in charge will teach you how to make dainty and appetizing dishes that will tickle the palate.

The goods demonstrated are not on sale in our store.